

An Exploration in to the Realm of War and its Exigencies

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Abstract

C.M Joad states that, "**Man has learnt to fly like a bird, but he hasn't learnt to live like aman**". With new technological development and artificial intelligence man possesses the ability to capture the universe but he fails to be a SPECIES WITH EMOTION & EMPATHY which is the core element of HUMANITY. That's why Mahatma Gandhi rightfully said that Nature has provided us in abundance for man's need and not for man's greed. The worst shades of man can be exposed during a war. War is immortal - Civilization changes, Technology changes, and even evolution changes but war and its consequences remain the same since ages unmemorable. Women and children are the first victims of war. Even today in 21st century Geo-political war prevails between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Hamas and cold wars are going on among many countries. War is not just the glorified cinematic projection of valour. War Literature with all its vigor showcases the soldiers who undergo several psychological, emotional, physical and mental trauma which has been carried throughout their life span. Psychologists diagnose these conditions as (PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). This paper projects how war - is the impact of the ego clash between two weapon hungry Big Brothers and not between the two civilians of the countries taking into analysis two American novels - 1. *CATCH -22* by Joseph Heller & 2. *THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT* by Norman Mailer

Key words: American War literature, Vicious cycle of war Literature, Psychoanalytic theory of War literature, and War Literature Psychology.

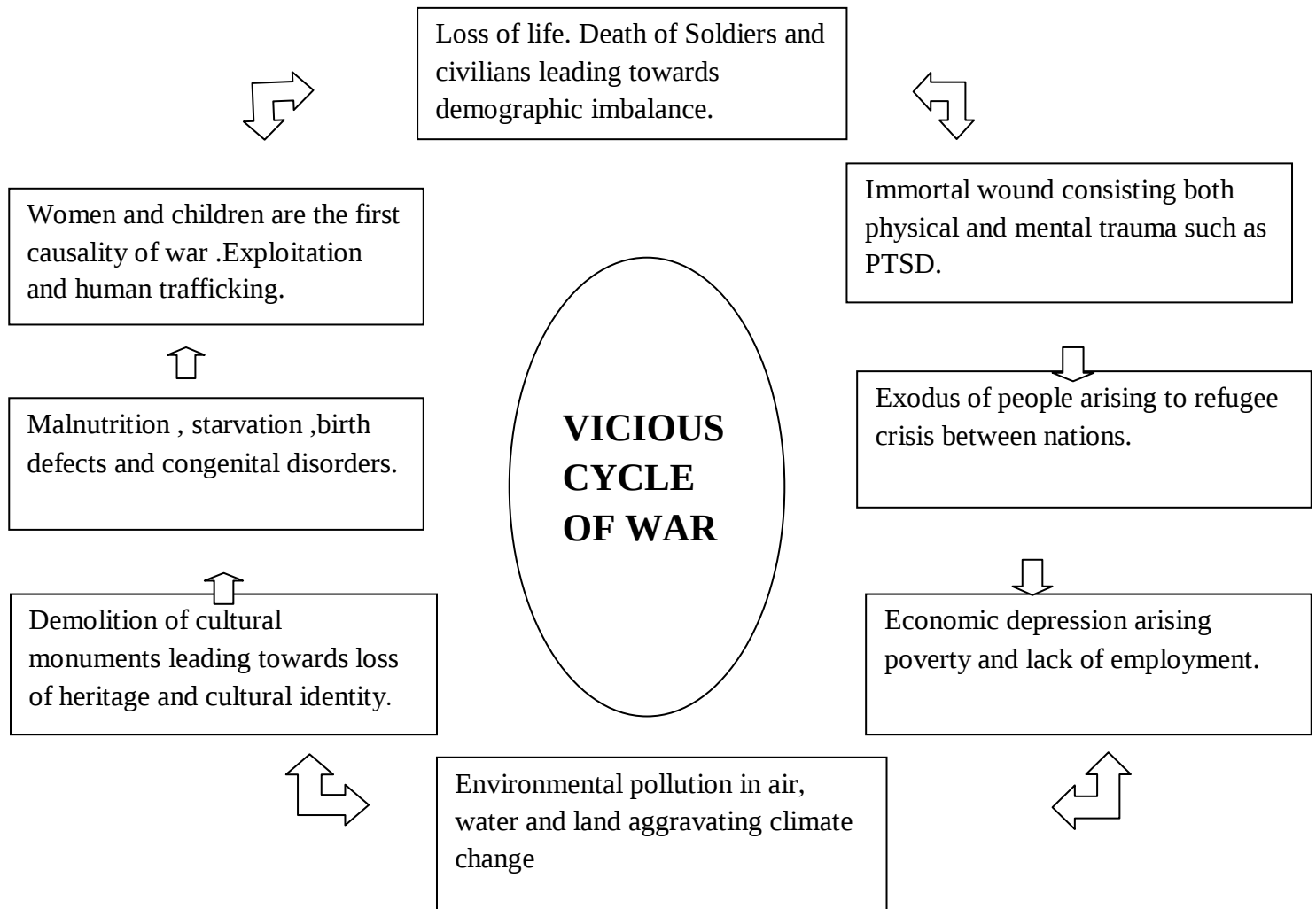
Introduction

War between countries can arise from a complex interplay of political, economical, social and historical factors. Conflicts over land or resources can escalate into wars. This might involve disagreements over borders, contested territories, or valuable resources like oil, water, or critical minerals. Clashes between countries with opposing political, economical or social ideologies which can lead to hostility. Differences in ethnicity, religion or culture can also be a source of conflict. These tensions can be amplified by historical grievances or a lack of shared identity. Competition over limited resources such as water or arable land can also be the aspects of conflicts. The whims and fancies of weapon hungry Big Brothers are umpteen in number but the victims are common civilians and soldiers who are with "Too Full of Milk of Human kindness " and who are literally peace lovers and no way the brain behind the plot of radical devastation.

Today in a mechanical life, love and humanism are becoming just words in dictionaries and so is the case of civilization. We overlook the fact that a cannibal using fork and knife is not civilization. Recently man 'the crown of creation' has become most clearly and ironically machine -A human machine. If by "machine" one means a physical system capable of performing certain functions, then humans are proving to be machines of a special biological kind, a soft machine made up of blood and flesh. This is high time humanity needs to be warned.

Today's technology gives us 3D visual experience but since time unmemorable reading a novel gives sheer personal experience through vivid imagination of the reader. It helps one to visualize the trauma and pain and like great Shakespearean tragedy it ends up with Cathartic effect..As Hudson claims, a nation's history is its biography and the nation's literature is its autobiography, various memorable, cherishable and often frustrating incidents has its major influence in the heart of readers. Hence War Literature is meant, not for entertainment but for enlightenment of the Human race.

Vicious cycle as exhibited by war Fictions



Classification of War& war Fictions

Every writer is a product of his time. War literature gives firsthand experience of war veterans in various regiments their trauma and sufferings in war hit zone. In olden days conventional and Guerilla war method was prevailing but with the advancement of technology in twentieth & twenty-first century war has taken a new Cyber form leading to Cyber war, Bio war and nuclear war. Thus War has profound and far- reaching impact upon individuals, communities, nations, and world at large. The impact of war includes Humanitarian impact, Economic impact, Social impact, Environmental impact, Political impact, Cultural impact and Physical and mental health impacts too.

Epoch - making war Fictions

"The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting"- (*The Armies of the Night*)

The Armies of the Night by Norman Mailer is a non-fictional novel that recounts the author's experience during 1967 Pentagon anti-war protest against the Vietnam War.

"The Vietnam war was the first war in history fought without any moral reason " - (*The Armies of the Night*)

Mailer, a prominent author and journalist participated in the protest and was arrested. The book blends reportage, memoir, and philosophical reflection to explore the events and themes surrounding the protest. Mailer's narrative begins with his decision to join the protest, driven by his moral opposition to the war.

"History is the central arena of our existence, and it is where the ultimate meaning of our lives must be found " - (*The Armies of the Night*)

He describes the events leading up to the protest, the march itself, and the clashes between protesters and authorities. Through his personal account, Mailer provides a unique perspective on the protest, its organizers, and its participants.

"In the years after World War II, America became a country where it was possible to be both right and wrong at the same time " - (*The Armies of the Night*)

The book also explores the broader cultural and historical context of the counterculture movement. Mailer reflects on the tension between politics and art, the role of the individual in shaping history, and the moral implications of the war.

"If a man's life is to be judged by the battles he chooses to fight, then perhaps history will remember us kindly " - (*The Armies of the Night*)

He weaves together philosophical musings, personal anecdotes, and historical analysis to create a complex and nuanced narrative. Throughout the book, Mailer grapples with the complexities of protest, activism, and social change. He questions the effectiveness of the protest and the motivations of its participants.

"He could see that the war had no center, no focus, no moral base -it was all machinery without heart" - (*The Armies of the Night*)

Mailer's introspection and self-criticism add depth to the narrative, making "The Armies of the Night" a thought-provoking exploration of individual responsibility and collective action. The book's innovative narrative structure, which blends journalism, memoir, and philosophical reflection, has been praised for its originality. Mailer's prose is lyrical, deep, and intellectually rigorous, making "The Armies of the Night" a landmark work of Mailer and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969. The book remains a significant work on the 1960s counterculture, social movements, and American identity, continuing to inspire reflection on activism, morality, and the human condition. In the words of the author

"The march was not a movement of power, but of conscience " - (*The Armies of the Night*)

The Paradoxical catch

'*Catch22*' is a satirical novel set in WWII , where the protagonist Yossarian is serving in a U.S. Army force B-25 as a bombardier , stationed on the Mediterranean base on Pianos during second world war.

"That's some catch, that catch -22" - (*Catch -22*)

A line that became part of everyday language, symbolizing any **no –win** situation.

The novel brilliantly explores the absurdity and chaos of war while delving in to the complexities of human behavior and the struggles of human mind.

"*There was only one catch and that was catch -22*" -(*Catch -22*)

The defining paradox is you can't escape danger because the rule itself prevents it.

'*Catch -22*' is a paradoxical military regulation that becomes a symbol of the novel's absurdity. This catch situation traps soldiers in to a nightmarish loop, making it seemingly impossible for them to escape their perilous situations. The keynote of catch is projected in chapter one where Youssarian's temperature is too high to send him back into combat, but too low to be a real fever.

"*Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy*" -(*Catch -22*)

The ultimate irony is "sanity is proven by wanting to avoid war, but that makes you ineligible to leave". Youssarian's ailments keep him in a situation of suspended animation: **"too sick to be well, and too well to be sick"**.

Catch-22 often results from rules, regulations, or procedures that an individual is subject to, but has no control over, because to fight the rule is to accept it.

"He was going to live forever, or die in the attempt". - (Catch -22) This reflects the dark humorous statement of defiance and absurd courage. Another example is a situation in which someone is in need of something that can only be obtained by not being in need of it. One connotation of the term is that the creators of the "catch-22" situation have created arbitrary rules in order to justify and conceal their own abuse of power.

*"It was miraculous. It was almost no trick at all, he saw,
to turn vice into virtue and slander into truth " -(Catch -22)*

This statement reveals Heller's biting critique of moral hypocrisy in institutions.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is defined as "the development of characteristic and persistent symptoms along with difficulty functioning after exposure to a life-threatening experience or to an event that either involves a threat to life or serious injury.

"Men went mad and were rewarded with Medals"- (Catch -22)

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association revised the PTSD diagnostic criteria in the fifth edition of its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), moving PTSD from the class of "anxiety disorders" into a new class of "trauma and stress or related disorders." DSM-5 categorizes the symptoms that accompany PTSD into four "clusters":

Intrusion—spontaneous memories of the traumatic event, recurrent dreams related to it, flashbacks, or other intense or prolonged psychological distress. **Avoidance**—distressing memories, thoughts, feelings, or external reminders of the event. **Negative cognitions and mood**—myriad feelings including a distorted sense of blame of self or others, persistent negative emotions (e.g., fear, guilt, shame), feelings of detachment or alienation, and constricted affect (e.g., inability to experience positive emotions). **Arousal**—aggressive, reckless, or self-destructive behavior; sleep disturbances; hypervigilance or related problems.

Youssarian's internal conflict becomes the focal point, illustrating the psychological toll of war on an individual. He grapples with the constant fear of death and a profound desire to survive, highlighting the impact of war on mental health such as post traumatic stress disorder in soldiers.

*"As far as Yossarian could recall, he explained to Clevenger with a patient smile,
Somebody was always hatching a plot to kill him and You are inches away from
death every time you go on a mission ." - (Catch -22)*

Psychoanalytic theory of personality reflected in war fiction

"Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely"

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the human personality consists of three distinct components: the Id, Ego, and Superego. This notion is brilliantly exhibited in "Armies at Night" by Mailer

*"It was the first time in history that Men fought
a war against their own Government" - (The Armies of Night)*

Freud believed these components interact dynamically, influencing personality development and behavior. Conflict between Id and Superego is mediated by the Ego, which balances desires with moral and social constraints. Healthy personality development requires balance among these components.

Id = "Want" (primitive desires), Ego = "Reason" (rational balance), Superego = "Should" (moral guidance). During wars Id becomes primary and Ego and Super ego subsides paving way to absolute corruption and war crimes.

Conclusion

*" The best way to defeat a catastrophe is to take actions to prevent it
long before it happens To do that one must fore see the catastrophe
in time and literature helps one to do so" - Isaac Asimov.*

The catastrophe primitive man faced was war and frown of nature such as flood, famine, fire and cyclone. Added to all these today, modern man is subjected to mental illness a catastrophe which is more subtle and is capable of affecting both physique and psyche of humanity. The consequences is

man - the so called "Beauty of the world, the paragon of animals", is slowly retrogressing towards machine hood. Modern world has become large body of Dystopia, where horror, boredom or dehumanization of the planet is accelerated by intelligent machines - We human beings.

War Literature, with its authentic and distinct portrayal of the multi-facetedness of life, comes to Man's aid. The birth of great literature marks the turning point in the history of mankind. The noble ideals and ignoble concepts, lofty aspirations and loathing attempts, sacrificing saviors and scheming traitors are delineated plenty in War literature. Man has both a role model and a wrong model to clearly learn how to be and how not to be. Hence, War literature cannot be simply brushed aside as a mere amalgamation of fictitious characters and incidents. It is in fact, the invaluable legacy left for the perusal of humanity to mould and shape their destiny and lead a contended life.

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